The Indian Stage

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OURSELVES

To-day with the dawn of the second decade of the twentieth century we begin our being. May the hour of our entree be auspicious and may Providence be our Conductor and Prompter on the stage of our activities.

We wish all our readers and friends a **Happy New Year**. May they grow in numbers and importance with the growth of time and each successive New-Year greeting.

In introducing ourselves to the notice of the public as the latest intruder on their kindness and consideration and as the organ of a potent if neglected factor in the social life of India at the present day, it would no doubt be formal and fashionable to begin with what may be termed a statement of objects and reasons—the reasons for our coming into being and the objects we have proposed to ourselves to achieve. But neither the rules of formality, nor the dictates of fashion, could induce us to believe that our readers are not already convinced of the need for such a journal. We do not therefore propose to begin life with an apology and an explanation. Those who support the stage, advocate its improvement, because they find that it is at once a source of amusement and a powerful element in the leavening of ideas and ideals and in the education and elevation of the community. Those who despise or oppose the stage are influenced only by a consideration either of the triviality and utter uselessness of it or of the large influence for evil it generally exerts on the community. Both classes of critics alike are therefore agreed about the importance to the community of the various questions connected with the stage, about the expenditure of time, talent and labour it implies and about the power for good or evil it generally is. From either point of view, therefore, it cannot be of little importance that every attempt should be made for the spread of right ideas and opinions about the drama and the stage. An undoubtedly useful function will be served, if only by the dissemination of information regarding the increasing dramatic activity in Southern India. The popularisation of proper and correct standards of judgment will certainly tend to exalt the function of the stage. At the same time it should be borne in mind that the stage is coming more and more to be recognised all over the civilised world, as an institution of great potency and promise, in the regulation of which, the leaders of thought and the legislatures of countries ought to exert themselves and in the support of which it would be the duty of States and Municipal Corporations to lend a helping hand,

A consideration of those qualities of the drama which constitute it a high and yet a popular form of literature, an enquiry into its characteristics as a branch of fine art, an examination into the principles of dramatic composition in its various forms and in all its latter-day developments, a discussion of the rules governing the difficult but enticing art of acting, an exposition of the stage-craft, a study of the shifts and devices of the scenic artist, a peep into the mysteries of the green-room, these are only a few of the innumerable branches of investigation which are sure to prove of interest and practical utility not merely to the professional and amateur votary of the stage but even to the layman who does not hesitate to pass judgments on whatever he sees and hears. In the sense indeed of being exclusively devoted to the drama and the stage, the magazine may be said to be specialised and its scope limited : but at the same time it would be inaccurate to speak of it as either technical in its subject matter or treatment or as narrow and devoid of interest to the general reader. In any case there can be little doubt that the general reader would find a great deal to interest him in studies of the various arts allied to the stage, such as painting, music, sculpture and architecture.

The rage for play-going and play-acting is if anything distinctly on the increase everywhere, even in this country. To-day it is a living and growing feature of communal life. And as it is true that every living person reaches an age when his ideals become pronounced and his efforts conscious, so it seems to us that the time has arrived in the development of the drama and the stage, at least in our part of the country, when we should endeavour to determine the end and regulate the course of such a mass of activity. Criticism of the principles underlying and the rules governing an art are always calculated to give an impulse to creation and tend to a proper appreciation of the higher forms of the art. We have no doubt that the drama and the stage in this country are destined to play a noble and important part in the great progressive movement that is going on before our eyes.

It is therefore with a high sense of the responsibility and duty cast on it, by its position among the amateur dramatic societies in Southern India, that the Suguna Vilasa Sabha has resolved to conduct such a journal. This unique institution, as it has been recently called by one of our leading men, has by strenuous and successful work during two decades helped to raise the stage in the Southern Presidency from being a by-word of vice and degradation to the position it now occupies of being a recognised factor in the education of the public and the only popular and approved kind of social entertainment. The practical work it has been doing till now will in future be supplemented by the issue of this journal devoted to the furthering of that very work.

There are hundreds of associations scattered all over the country and engaged in the same mission. To all of them we make this appeal for sympathy and co-operation, for, without it, the journal cannot realise the full measure of its usefulness.

To the generous and enlightened public we appeal for support and encouragement, for, without it, no success even if possible is worth the achieving.

ON THE NEW-YEAR EVE

Creation's curtain rolls again,
And acts and scenes in endless chain
Will cosmic drama still sustain
To the everlast.
The ten of twenty's part is played ;
He's sadly moving off aside
From our presence now to fade
Into the past.
Can all this world of Maya be
A stage of false reality ?
I cannot tell ;
Ding Dong Bell.

The New Year makes his entrec on the stage
With cheers and made-up merry face ;
His part we cannot now presage.
But what of time or space
I cannot tell !
The past is still of us ;
The present is with us ;
The future all in us ;
And the world is but a view,
And self alone is true.
Such are the scenes sublime
On the stage of time :
And all the world may Maya be
And on the stage reality.
Who, who can tell !
Ding Dong Bell.

For all I know I never cared,
To come and live I never dared :
And where or how I was ensnared
I cannot tell.
I find myself one morning here
And find it is a stage,
Whereon I must appear,
As prince or as a page.
To live is but to act,
To find one's part and that enact ;
Without a hope or fear,
No matter if they cheer or jeer.
Not all the world may Maya be,
There's on the stage reality !
Who see, can tell :
Ding Dong Bell.

The Lord of all this puppet show
I long to see and know :
But far away he holds the string
And makes us dance and sing ;
And we are vain :
He won't allow
The why or how ;
And we complain.
But he that made us, made the law ;
He loves us all and lives in us :
He can't withdraw !
Let us pray, that he may
Assign a hero's part,
And teach the art
Of acting well,
In life's drama divine,
Of mystery and deed design.
If life be thus,
Who says the world's reality
Can through the stage not realised be ?
I cannot tell ;
Ding Dong Bell.

Vivius.

THE STORY OF A MEMORABLE PATRONAGE

Of all the achievements of the Suguna Vilasa Sabha, there seems to be certainly none, of which the members have greater reason to be proud, than the securing of the patronage, some years back, of Sir S. Subramania Iyer, Dewan Bahadur, L. L. D., K. C. I. E. It is not that this 'nature's nobleman' has not been even lavish in the distribution of his patronage. There was nothing in the man or the manner to encourage any sense of special achievement in those favoured by him. He preached and practised private and secret charity for the simple reason that he never could say 'no' in the sight of want and distress. He was not a severe or fastidious critic of men and things and his approbation and praise were not weighed and calculated to imbue men with a proper feeling of their value. He was generous, perhaps (as the phrase goes) to a fault and he admired and praised all that was good as only children and sages do. It cannot indeed be said of him that in his devotion to the profession of the law and a brilliant career at the bar and on the bench, he allowed his sympathies to become exclusive or narrow or his mind to develop devoid of any taste or interest in those branches of learning which have received the name of humanities. It may be within the recollection of many that presiding at an anniversary of a young men's society sometime in the early eighties, at *Ramamandiram*, the residence of Rajah Sir. S. Ramaswami Mudaliar, he delivered a long and inspiring address on the subject of the stage as an educator. Nor can it even be said without exaggeration that the granting of the patronage by him to the Suguna Vilasa Sabha has been the cause directly or indirectly of any notable increase in the means, influence or prestige of the institution. Those who know the story of that patronage will probably agree that it is not on account of any of these reasons, that we stated that the Sabha may be proud of the permission so graciously accorded to associate his name with the work it is carrying on.

The adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Tamil by Mr. P. Sambandam had been made ready to be staged after elaborate preparation and equipment: and placards and bills had announced to expectant Madras that the performance would be under the kind and distinguished patronage of his Excellency Lord Ampthill, that splendid man of broad and sincere spmpathies who was then about to lay down his office as Governor of the province. All of a sudden one fine evening a few days before the date fixed for the performance, the Secretary of the Sabha was sent for by the 'Lord Ampthill Entertainment Committee' headed by Mr. Justice Subramania Iyer and requested in terms of a command that the sabha should perform a few scenes at the entertainment. This was soon found to involve the postponement of the performance of Hamlet already announced and in consequence the foregoing of the patronage of His Excellency for the performance. All circumstances then pointed to Sir S. Subramania Iyer as the only one who should appropriately fill the place of patronage so graciously offered to be taken by the retiring Governor, and he was accordingly approached with the request. He consented. His health however at the time was very indifferent and he stipulated that he should not be asked to stay at the performance more than half

an hour. On the evening of the play when Sir S. Subramania Iyer arrived, the hall was packed to the full and the reception accorded to the grand old knight by the audience was as enthusiastic as it was hearty. The patron insisted on his paying for his admission with a cheque for a large sum of money. The curtain rose and then began the performance which, from the point of view of the literary merit of the adaptation, or the general excellence of the acting or the equipment of the stage, indicated the high-water mark of excellence as yet attained by the sabha. The appointed half hour expired, but Sir S. Subramania Iyer did not seem to realise it. An hour passed and a discreet intimation was given to the gentleman that he had expressed a desire to leave the hall early. But he would not move. Two hours—three hours—and still he could not be induced to leave. He would stay on to the end. During the entire performance one who was by could have noticed the almost child-like whole-heartedness and obvious emotion with which he let himself follow the various and varying scenes of that wonderful drama.

When the performance was over, long past midnight, he rose and unable to contain himself spoke of the performance and the work of the Sabha in words which though few were felt by everybody that listened to him to be from the bottom of a large heart of gold. To the author of the adaptation, to the actors on the stage, to the members of the sabha, those words were more than recompense for all the work done—words of noble praise, invigorating encouragement, and inspiring purpose. But it would seem that words are not enough. Almost before thirty hours pass by, another letter is received by the Secretary of the Sabha couched in words of simplicity and modesty which it would be an education to read, enclosing another cheque for five times the amount first paid. There was also a special injunction in the letter that the matter should not be published. But now after the retirement of the learned Judge into private life it almost seems to have become a matter of history and one feels as though even justified in wilfully disobeying the injunction at this distance of time. Such generous appreciation, almost involuntary and sublime in its simplicity and sincerity has somewhat of the divine grace in it. What palpable benefits have flowed to the sabha from becoming the recipient of such grace, it cannot indeed be estimated. But it is a mistaken method of calculation that would adopt the tabulation of palpable benefits and it is a short-sighted view of human good that would measure it by material standards.

The association of a great name and the good wishes of a pure heart, are not unlike the influence of the conjunction of a great luminary in astrology.

Even in the retirement from the bustle and business of common life in which our Patron-saint is passing the beautiful evening of his life, we are grateful that it has been given to us to begin the life of this new journal by associating it with his name and presenting to our readers a likeness of his benign features.

THE USES AND EFFECTS OF ACTING

The question whether the stage serves any useful purpose has often been asked and answered as often. But the questions and answers have generally been only from the point of view of the audience or the public. From that point of view indeed the discussion, if not scientific or satisfactory, has, at all events been ample. There are still many who look upon the stage and dramatic representations generally, as certainly trivial and wasteful, if not also mischievous, immoral and sinful. But the vast majority of men and women in all civilised countries are agreed in regarding the stage as certainly a means of harmless and often indispensable amusement if not also as a great factor in the education and amelioration of society. We do not propose to discuss any of these questions now—under the present heading. As the wording of the title indicates, what is proposed to be dealt with in this and the succeeding articles of the series is the effect of acting as an occupation whether regular or occasional, on the actor himself.

It is a matter of common knoweledge that a person's occupation generally affects, for the better or for the worse, his mind as well as his character and manners. It is a matter of science that no one can say or do anything be it ever so trivial, without his nervous system having been to some extent modified and impressed thereby, and without his physical and mental constitution undergoing a change. A teacher of boys, a clergyman, a lawyer or a doctor each develops a special trait, gets into a habit of looking on life from a point of view at once particular and peculiar, cannot perhaps take part in general conversation for even ten minutes at a time without revealing his profession, betrays idiosyncrasies, curious aptitudes and inaptitudes and defects of manner, and generally conducts himself in such a way as to allow of no doubt regarding the cause and origin of all such diverse manifestation. A soldier may be known by his walk. A shepherd shows himself in his look. A tradesman reveals himself in his speech. And so on in respect of nearly every known pursuit or profession. In fact the relation between a man's calling in life and his mental and moral disposition does not seem to be limited to the development and betrayal of characterstics from which the calling of the person can infallibly be inferred. If it were so limited it should be of comparatively small consequence. It is as a fact more far-reaching. There can be no doubt that to an appreciable extent it modifies a man's ideals; shifts his point of view; alters his perception; changes his logic; affects his likes and dislikes, strengthens certain courses of activity while incapacitating him for others; and reforms his general character by the addition as well as subtraction of important elements. A consideration of this interesting aspect of human life would perhaps launch us on an interminable enquiry foreign to our present purpose.

It is however necessary to note in this connection that it is not merely those regular, serious and prolonged and continuous activities which constitute what is called the calling of a man that affect his mind and character, but even those activities which may seem trifling or in the nature of mere amusement, and

only spasmodic and occasional that often serve to impress a man with features of mind and body, with modes of thinking, feeling and behaving which if unmistakable as to their origin are none the less persistent in their effects. We can certainly tell a sportsman by his gait. A habitual wicket-keep may easily be indentified by the breadth of his stand. An amateur songster may frequently be surprised while unconsciously humming a tune. It is certainly true that some manly sports tend to develop in the player habits of endurance, discipline, courage, a certain generousness of impulse and an inclination to give and take which you can try in vain to discover in many a young or old man who has never taken kindly to such games.

And in the same way it is equally true that an actor is seen acting as often off the stage as on it.

In the nature of things it cannot but be so. If acting consists mainly in seeming to be another person and in speaking the words and expressing the feelings of the other person, in a word, in behaving like what you are not, then, it is clear that a constant practice in the art must necessarily affect one's opinions of men and things, one's reasoning and judgment, nay even his philosophy and religion, his susceptibility to feeling, the breadth and nature of his sympathies, his manner of talk, his behaviour with his friends and enemies, and possibly his entire character and even the underlying personality on which it rests.

There is no doubt that acting is only one of the numerous callings pursued by civilised man and not certainly the most important or one followed by a very large number of people in any community. Even as a hobby of the amateur it cannot be said to be, generally speaking, very popular or encouraged largely for any direct benefits accruing therefrom as in the common case of out-door games and sports. And yet it is perhaps the most enticing and absorbing of occupations.

The question why it is so enticing or absorbing, belongs properly to the psychology and metaphysics of acting and we have here nothing to do with it. It is enough for our present purpose to note the fact of the enticing and absorbing nature of the interest it evokes in its votary.

Any young man that has tried acting once and succeeded in a measure and felt the warm pulse of achievement throb through him, is for ever after yearning for it with something not unlike madness and without a capacity to resist even as in the case of drunkenness. It is probably for this reason that for a number of years there were in the statute-book of the Suguna Vilasa Sabha two rules which to many must have seemed inexplicable—one that no member who was a student appearing for a university examination would be permitted to attend the Sabha or take part in a performance during two months preceding the examination and the other that no one who was a member of any other dramatic society would be admitted as a member of the Sabha. Despite all that has been said and written about the essential ugliness of the stage and the green-room and about the game not being worth the candle, the art of acting has continued to attract large numbers of votaries and will always certainly continue to do so. It therefore behoves us all to consider and find out whether as an occupation either professionl or amateur the pursuit of acting is calculated to confer any benefits on the individual following it, whether on a stock-taking

how the good that may accrue will balance against the harm that may be done and whether if any and what safeguards require to be adopted to provide against possible evils. Such an enquiry cannot but be fruitful of results not only to persons engaged in the pursuit of the art but alike to those who feel attached to it or are likely one day to take to it and to all those who have the management and education of young men in their hands.

THEATRICAL REMINISCENCES

BY MR. GLYN BARLOW, M. A.

My reminiscence of my first visit to the theatre carries me back to the time when I was a tiny child—of an age at which the memory has scarcely begun to work, and nothing but cloudy pictures are formed for the grown man's mind to look at. But it is generally the case that one or two important events stamp themselves in sharp outlines on a child's memory—and who shall say that a child's first visit to the pantomime is not an important event! My memory did not hand down to me the name of the particular pantomime that I saw ; but I know now, by my recollection of some of the scenes, that it must have been "Gulliver's travels". I don't remember all the scenes ; I don't remember anything about Gulliver leaving home or about his voyage; but one scene stands out in very sharp outlines on my memory. It was a scene that filled me with delicious terror. It was Gulliver in Brobdignag. Gulliver, who was probably an actress of small stature dressed as a boy, was standing in a corn-field—the imitation corn standing at the back of him much higher than his head—while an enormous hand holding a giant sickle appeared from the back, reaping the corn and moving in time to the lively strains of the band. I shall never forget the pity that I felt for little Gulliver in his loneliness and the dread with which I awaited the appearance of the Brobdignagian giant—I couldn't have pronounced the long word then!—to whom the hand belonged. He appeared at last. How the creature was constructed I don't know. I take it that each of his legs was a man and that there was a man to work each of his arms, and yet a fifth man with a huge mask to work his head, all of them enclosed in some sort of framework covered with clothes. I have no doubt that the giant was a satire upon the human form divine ; but I had no eyes for his deformities ; I was lost in astonishment at his size. I remember that I was greatly relieved to find that he was a gentle giant and that he did little Gulliver no harm. And then the glory of the transformation scene! With the development of stage machinery, I have seen finer transformation scenes since then, but never a one that impressed me so wonderfully. Swift's Gulliver never went into fairyland; but what would a pantomime be without its fairies! Somehow or other, therefore, Gulliver found himself in fairyland; and, while the stage lights changed from red to blue and from blue to green and through all the rest of the colours of the rainbow, big roses and lilies fell down one after another and disclosed fairies—one, two, three, till there were some two or three hundred gaily-dressed golden-haired fairies dancing mazy dances on the huge stage. The band played; the fairies sang; the dance grew mazier and more mazy still—it was all very lovely—but I haven't the slightest recollection

how the dance or the story came to an end. I am ashamed to think that it is not unlikely that, in spite of the loveliness of the ladies and the sweetness of their singing, I went to sleep! My only excuse is that it was probably long past the time at which I was wont to be put to bed.

A second reminiscence shall be my first visit to the regular play. The piece that I saw was scarcely appropriate for a small boy's introduction to the grown-up stage. It was the *School for Scandal.* It was not, of course, with the permission of parents or guardians or of pastors or masters that I went. I had been left for a week in the care of a nursery-governess, and she allowed a friend to take me out for a "treat". The friend, who was a mere youth, shaped his treat in the form of a visit to the theatre. To him, I suppose, the theatre was merely the theatre, and one play was as good as another. Possibly too the word "School" in *School for Scandal* led him to imagine that it was a particularly appropriate piece for a small boy! However, I was too young to understand the piece properly, so I was in no way scandalised. I knew that Lady Teazle was very wrong to go and see Joseph Surface; but I regarded the indignant husband's discovery of Lady Teazle behind the screen much as if it had been an indignant schoolmaster's discovery of a boy playing truant in a cake-shop. I missed the point—appropriately so — of the subtle satires on life, and lost much of the study of humanity as Sheridan taught it; but I remember that I nevertheless followed the play with the deepest interest all through. It was the farcical element in the drama that appealed most strongly to my boyish understanding. The part of the Jewish picture dealer was played by Toole, one of the most comic of comedians of a bygone generation; and I remember that in the boyishness of my ideals I thought that the cleverest thing in the play was the picture-dealer's "business" when, in a momentary interval in the bargaining for the family pictures which he had been called into the house to buy, he slyly caught up a bottle of wine from a table beside him and swallowed some of its contents behind the owner's back! If Sheridan had introduced a pantomime-clown to run between he Jew's legs and upset him while he was indulging in his clandestine draught, I should no doubt have considered the *School for Scandal* a dramatic ideal. But even without the pantomime-clown I am sure that Sheridan had no more appreciative spectator that night than I, though the *motif* of my appreciation was scarcely complementary to his genius.

The last reminiscence which I will record shall be that of the first time that I saw Irving. The piece was *Macbeth*, and Irving and Ellen Terry played the wicked king and queen. The play had been running for weeks before I went to see it, but none the less every reserved seat in the huge theatre had been booked, and it was only in the unreserved seats in the pit and the gallery that a chance visitor could hope to find room. The three-shillings for a seat in the pit was better suited to my purse than the high prices for boxes and stalls, so I felt no distress for want of reserved accommodation. I was accompanied by a friend, and, anticipating a crowd, we took care to arrive at the theatre more than an hour before the play began. Instead of an hour it ought

to have been two hours or even three. The broad alley leading to the door of the pit was already occupied by a tightly-packed crowd, and the crowd had already overflowed into the street, lined up two-deep alongside the shops and kept in their places by the police. My friend and I had to take our stand at the end of the long *queue*, some twenty or thirty yards away from the entrance to the alley, and with fresh arrivals each minute the tail gradually extended its length behind us. At last there was a movement in front. The doors had been opened, and the audience were being admitted. We moved slowly forward. In the street it was easy to keep our places in the narrow line, but as soon as we turned into the broader alley we found that the people there were pushing for the door. "Pushing" is a mild way of expressing it; but, although we did our share in the pushing, we were still a yard or two from the gate of Paradise when a voice from within proclaimed in official and stentorian tones: "Only standing-room left!" Well, we would stand rather than go back; and, moreover, we couldn't have gone back if we had wished to do so; and with a little more pushing we found ourselves at last inside the theatre, two units in a long-lined crowd standing at the back of the chairs in the pit. A few minutes later there was no more standing room; the door was shut in the faces of hundred of disappointed people, and we were awaiting the rise of the curtain. *Enter* the orchestra. The overture stirs our expectations; the final chords resound; the curtain flies up, and we behold the three witches. Irving was great on scenery, and the huge stage presented a most weirdly witch-like "desert place." Thunder roared and lightning flashed, as the witches planned their next merry meeting. Hey presto! and the "desert place" was gone, and we beheld the "camp near Forres" and heard the "alarum within", and listened to the "bloody man" describing Macbeth's valiant deeds. Hey presto! and we beheld "a blasted heath". It was a grand piece of scenery, but it was Irving—not scenery—that we had come to behold, and our excitement is at its height when the third witch exclaims:

> A drum, a drum!
> Macbeth doth come.

Enter. Macbeth and Banquo.

Macbeth.—So fair and foul a day I have not seen.

The effect is somewhat disappointing. Irving was always stagey, even at his best, and, although it is quite in the nature of things that a man's opening remarks should be about the state of the weather, it is not natural to discuss the weather in stagey tones. But the interest grows, and the performance is a glorious success. Irving's greatness as an actor has been a subject of much discussion. His reputation depended more, perhaps, on his stage-management than upon his stage-playing. He made it his care to engage none but really good actors, and, with tact and friendliness all round, he kept his companies together and inspired each individual with an enthusiastic determination to do his best; he was lavish with fine scenery; he acted well himself; his interpretations of Shakespeare manifested a scholarly appreciation of the great dramatist; he was of a versatile genius; and finally he was a right-down "good-fellow", who made many friends and no enemies, so that rounds of applause were always ready for him, whether he was at the highest

or the lowest degree of his excellence. I left the theatre that night with a feeling —confirmed by later representations by Irving—that I had seen a truly great actor, but by no means the ideal. As a matter of fact, I was more impressed by Ellen Terry than by Irving. She was magnificent throughout, and in the sleep-walking scene in particular she was as near the ideal as an actress could well be. The picture of the wild-eyed queen, with a taper in her hand—' lights half-down'—descending the magnificent staircase of the gorgeous palace, remains impressed on my mind more powerfully, I think, than any other stage-picture that I can recall.

" Only standing-room !" The reminiscence is not altogether comfortable. To stand for something like three hours together shoulder to shoulder in a crowd,

> While those behind push ' Forward'.
> And those in front push ' Back'.

is not in itself inspiring. My companion—who by the way was a lady—fainted in the middle of the performance; but, luckily, there was a cloak-room just behind her, where she found her breath, and also a chair. I should certainly not recommend any one who has a regard for his personal comfort to go to a theatre when there is " only standing-room"; but the sight of a great actor is worth a sacrifice, and in spite of the discomforts, that I endured, I find much pleasure in my reminiscence of Irving as Macbeth.

CORRESPONDENCE

To The Editors of the Indian Stage.

Portia's Hint to Bassanio.

Dear Sirs,

It must be an exceedingly interesting question to Shakespearean scholars and to all those who have studied " The Merchant of Venice" with any critical insight whether Portia loving Bassanio as she does has not given him a broad hint as regards the right casket to choose and whether she has not forsworn herself, to use her own words, by so giving the hint. It is quite clear that she knows which the right casket is "wherein she is contained." She says so herself to Bassanio:—

> I could teach you
> How to choose right, but then I am forsworn
> So will I never be.
>
> —*Act III, Scene ii, lines* 11 *to* 13.

If then she knew which the right casket was, she must have been more or less than human not to have let a hint escape her consciously or unconsciously as to the choice to be made even to one, to whom according to herself already belonged, her one half and also the other half. I do not believe that Shakespeare has portrayed her as more or less than human, I have my own ideas and theory in the matter but I should like to put the question and call forth a discussion in your columns before ventilating my views

I hope some of your readers will in response to my invitation contribute to the clearing up of the point.

Yours sincerely,

S. P.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

भावप्रकाशः

BHÂVÂPRAKÂSAH.

THE

"ELUCIDATION OF EMOTIONS"

A COMPLETE TREATISE ON DRAMATURGY

BY

SÂRADÂTANAYA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
WITH TEXT AND CRITICAL NOTES

BY

T. S. NARAYANA SASTRIAR, B.A., B.L.
High Court Vakil, Madras.

प्रथमोऽधिकारः :—भावस्वरूपनिर्णयः ।

PRATHAMO, DHIKARAH-BHAVA-SVARUPA-NIRNAYAH.

CHAPTER I.—Determination of the Nature of Emotions.

श्रीगणेशायनमः ।

SALUTATION TO LORD GANES'A !

At the beginning of his excellent Treatise on Dramaturgy, desiring the unobstructed completion of what he wishes to begin, the author invokes the appropriate divinity for the removal of impediments :—

प्रश्च्योतन्मदमन्थर भ्रमरिकास्सङ्कारगीतं मुहु
र्हेलाबृंहितवादनव्यतिकरं भावोल्लसत्प्रक्रियम् ।
नृत्यन्नस्तु सुखायनः करिमु खः पुष्पोपहारैश्चिरा
दानन्दी नटभावितैरिव यथाभावैः स सामाजिकः॥

Sri-Gaṇesâya Namah !

1. Praschyôtan-mada-manthara-bhramarika-jhankâra-gîtam m u h u r
Helâ-brihmita-vâdana-vyatikaram bhavôllasat-prakriyam ;
Nrîtyann astu sukhâya nah kari-mukhah pushpôrais chirâd
Ânandî naṭa-bhâvitair iva yathâ-bhâvais sa sâmâjikah.

1. May Gajânana, the Elephant-faced God, be pleased with the offerings of flowers like the spectator in a theatrical hall who is delighted with the various emotions of the characters represented by the actors on the stage, and may He be long propitious to us, dancing as He does like an actor, frequently singing as it were by reason of the sweet buzzing of the female bees which are slowly whirling around Him as they become intoxicated with the juice of the rut flowing profusely from His temples, intermixed as it were with the sound of musical instruments by reason of the deep roaring sound emitted by Him in amorous sports, with majestic gestures brilliantly expressive of His emotions.

As Kari-mukha, the Elephant-faced God, the son of Siva and Parvatî is the God of Wisdom and Remover of obstacles, He is invoked and worshipped at the commencement of every important undertaking. He is here represented by the author as dancing with joy with his protuberant belly, and four hands and with the head of an elephant. The figure is allegorical and is intended to express the great philosophical truths taught in the Upanishads. His elephant-face represents, by its very form, the mystic syllable 'Om'(A + U + M) called Praṇava with which the Supreme God is to be comprehended. It is also symbolical of wisdom and prosperity ; and those

who desire wisdom and prosperity invoke Gaṇeśa in this form. His protuberant belly shows that all the worlds are contained in him, that He is Omnipresent and Omnipotent, and that He is the Creator, Protector and Destroyer of the Universe. His four hands indicate that He is the bestower of the four great objects of human desire—Merit, Wealth, Enjoyment and Liberation—and that those who worship Him are sure to attain these four great Purushârthas. By holding Pâsa (noose) in one hand, and Aṅkuśa (hook) in the other, He declares as it were that one should give up Aśâ and Amarsha—Desire and Anger, the two great enemies of man, before he could approach the Lord of the Universe for the attainment of these four great objects of human desire. The head has only one tusk and the other is pulled out and held in one of His hands to demonstrate to the world that there is but One God who is the Cause of all, and that the highest beatitude could be attained only by realising the Oneness of the Absolute Being—Advaita-sâkshâtkâra. The other hand which bears the Abhaya-mudra,—the seal of Protection from Fear, assures the seekers after the truth, that this Realisation of the Oneness of the Absolute Being is neither impossible nor impracticable, and holds out a promise that every truth-seeker will certainly attain, one day or another, this Advaita-sâkshâtkâra. He is therefore dancing with joy like an expert actor on the stage representing all these ideas and emotions in His mind to His devotees, who like the intelligent spectators in a theatrical hall have bestowed all their thought and attention on him. By Yoga or concentration of mind alone one could join with the supreme Lord of Bliss in sharing in His eternal Beatitude. Just as the actor reveals to his spectators, the ideas and emotions of the character represented by him on the stage by means of acting or Nritya, by Gîta, Vâdya and Nṛitta—the triple means of representation, so also, the Lord of the Universe reveals that this yoga could be attained by the triple path of salvation known as Bhakti-mârga (path of devotion), Jñâna-marga (path of knowledge) and Karma-marga (path of action). The female-bees are the Srutis and Upanishads, which, fully enraptured with the Brahmananda the Bliss of the Supreme Being, are singing the praise of the Lord. This shows that yoga could be attained by a man by true devotion to God, Teachers and Scriptures, by Nâmasaṅkîrtanas and songs and prayers in praise of the greatness of the supreme Lord. This is the Bhakti-mârga. If this is really to bear fruit, it should be supported by Jñâna-mârga or the path of knowledge. The S'ravana must be followed by Manana, and the S'rutis by the Sâstras, the faith by the knowledge of the real nature of things ascertained by the various modes of proofs or Pramanas: just as the singing of the actor should be accompanied by the various musical instruments, to produce a greater effect on the audience. These two paths should be further strengthened by the Karma-mârga, by performing one's own duties, Nitya and

and Naimittika prescribed in the śrutis and śastras. But he should perform all his duties without attachment to their results ; it should be Nishkâma-karma. Just as an actor who acts the part of a King represents him by appropriate gestures and movements without for one moment imagining that he is really a King, and that he is really receiving the honours of a king from his brother-actors, so a man should do his duties whether they be towards his family, his neighbours or his countrymen for their own sake, and should never care for any benefits to result from the performance of those duties.

Some manuscripts read 'वः' instead of 'नः' and 'पुण्योपहारैः' instead of 'पुष्पोपहारैः' in the 3rd foot of the above stanza. Punyopahâra will mean sacred offerings, and will include not only offerings of flowers, but also offerings of fruits, food etc., presented to God as Nivedana. नः refers to the audience or the readers of the work.

वन्देबृन्दावनचरं गोविन्दं गोपिकापतिम् ।
गाः पालयन्तं गायन्तं वेणुनाषड्जवादिना ॥२॥

Vande Brindâvana-charam
Gôvindam Gôpikâ-patim ;
Gâh pâlayantam jâyantam
Vênunê shadja-vâdin'â.

Now as the present work on Dramaturgy is ancillary to Sâhitya or Alankâra S'astra,—Science of Rhetoric; and as the latter is ancillary to S'abda S'astra or Vyakarana—the Science of Language; and as this latter again is ancillary to Poetry or Kavya, by which we understand Driśya Kavya (Visible Poetry) and S'ravya Kavya (Audible Poetry), whether written in verse (Padya) or in Prose (Gadya) or in Verse and Prose ; and as has been stated in the Vishnu Purana "the utterances of Poetry, one and all, and all songs—these are portions of Vishnu, the great-souled, who wears a form composed of sound,"—the author next proceeds to offer his salutations to Vishnu :—

2. I bow to Gôvinda who made the forest of Brindavana blessed by His Holy Feet treading upon it; as the Lord of milkmaids, protecting the kine and as He sang to the accompaniment of His flute which responded to the Shadja tune.

As śringara or the sentiment of Love is the most prominent of the Emotions described in this work, the author invokes Vishnu in the form of Lord Krishna, as He is the embodiment of the perfect state of Love which is ever drawing us to itself. But even of this Chief Avatar of Vishnu, the picture that is presented to us is that of Bala-Gôpala, the marvellous Cow-herd Boy of Gôkula, surrounded by the Gôpikas as they danced round and round with that self-same Gôpala, the All-in-All of the heart and existance in that wonderful dance known as Rasa-krîda and protecting the cows at the same time by the soul-stirring strains of His music, as He played His ever-favourite flute under the cooling shade of the sweet-smelling Kadamba-tree in that enchanted forest of Brindâvana on the bank of the ever-blue Yamunâ (Jamna) ; and not that of Srî Krishna Bhagavân, Lord Srî Krishna, the great

spiritual Teacher and Saviour of the World with four hands showing His full Divine Nature, as we find him discoursing with Arjuna in that marvellous Poem—the Bhagavad-gîta. That is the reason why He is called here by the name of 'Gôvinda' and not by the usual name of Srî Kṛishṇa'. The appellation 'Gôvinda' primarily means 'the Lord or Protector of the Cows'; and it aptly refers to the earlier portion of Kṛishṇa's life. That this is the primary meaning of the term 'Gôvinda' is evident from Hari-Vamsa (Ch. 76, Vs. 45) where young Kṛishṇa of Gôkula is thus addressed by Devendra: "I am the Lord of the Devas, and you have become the Lord of the Cows; people on the earth will henceforth continue to praise you under the name of Gôvinda'." No doubt, the appellation 'Govinda' also means 'the protector of the Vedas', 'the protector of the Earth', and as such it is also equally applicable to Lord Srî Kṛishṇa in his later life as he specially incarnated to save the Veda, from being misinterpreted by giving the essence of their teachings in a nut-shell as it were in that Divine song, and to protect the Earth from its being overpowered with unrighteousness, by protecting the pious and by punishing the impious. The term 'Govinda' may also be interpreted to mean 'One who can be comprehended only through the Vêdânta Vâkyas or Upanishads'; it can apply to Lord Nârâyaṇa, the Supreme Being Himself—the Sach-chit-ânanda-mûrti—the Embodiment of Being, Intelligence and Bliss. But the author of this work is not describing Nârâyaṇa in His Full Divine form as Sat-Chit-Ânanda, the truth of which can be realized only in theory; but only in His Half-Divine form, as the Embodiment of Life, Truth and Love, which can be realized by every devotee in practical life, and which was practically realized by the Gôpikâs in their actual lives.

Here again the figure that is presented to us is purely allegorical, and is intended to bring out the great truths regarding the incarnation of S'rî Kṛishṇa

The key to this allegory lies in the expression 'Gôpikâpati'; and the expression may mean either 'the husband of a Gôpî' or 'the husband of several Gôpîs.' 'If Gôpikâ' is taken in the singular number, it means Râdhâ, the chief among the Gôpîs of the Vraja; but if it is taken in the plural number, then it will refer to Râdhâ, her eight chief companions, and other Gôpîs who Joined in the Râsa Krîdâ. In the first sense, Kṛishṇa is Purusha, and Râdhâ is Prakriti; or to put it in the language of the Vedântins, Kṛishṇa is Paramâtman or the Supreme Soul, and Râdhâ is His Ichchhâ-śâkti or Will-Force. Or again in the words of Vallabhâchârya, God is the Husband, and the Energy of His will, Nature, is His Wife; God is the Lover, and Nature, is His loving Lady-Love. "By His All pervading Essence, the only support and sustenance of Nature, He clasps His Lady-Love to His bosom and dances with her to the intricate steps of the music of His Laws." This is the Râsa Dance in the aggregate (samashti), and the same Râsa Dance in vyashṭi is being performed by every

one of us at all times, though we may be unconscious of the same.

In the second sense, therefore, Kṛishṇa is the Great soul, and Râdhâ is His Little soul. Kṛishṇa is the Causeless Love, and Râdhâ is His Principle which sets His Love into motion. Her eight companions are the Eight Chief Devotional Aspects, and the other Gôpîs, the inclinations and minor attributes of her ensouled mind. " They came with the Lord from glory and were born as Gôpîs in the Brindavana. Other Gôpîs were incarnations of goddesses, the presiding deities of nature's spiritual forces and attributes, while others were incarnations of some of the highest illuminated male saints (Rishis) who had prayed for ages and ages in every birth to serve the lord personally with the tender devotion of a loving woman. The love of these Gôpîs for Kṛishṇa was absolutely selfless. They loved Him for the sake of spontaneous, causeless love they felt for Him and which His Personality inspired in them, for, Kṛishṇa was that Causeless Love îtself. "

We are all, then, of Vraja, and " each of us, of the enlightened inner eye," as our revered Bâbâ Prêmânanda Bhârati puts it, "a dancing Gôpî—male or female whatever we may be externally, it matters not. We are all Gôpîs, human male or human female, we are all spiritually feminine, for Kṛishṇa alone is the One Male, and we all, particles of Nature, are all female. We are all the lady-loves, the brides and wives of our One—Husband, Lover and Beloved—Kṛishṇa.

What is then Brindâvana ? It is not "Râdhâ's Wood", now forming an important town, a few miles North-West of Mathurâ and standing on the left bank of Yamunâ. Within our heart of hearts is the forest of Brindâvana—the Ânandamaya Kôs'a,' in which the microscopic blue river of love, Sushumnâ, flows, lapping with thrills of joy, the bank of the bowery lawn—the Sahasrâra chakra, where Kṛishṇa, our soul, with his Gôpîs—our ensouled mental aspirations, is performing His ever-favourite, never-ending Râsa Dance. " The one soul played like so many souls with so many hearts, and yet the hearts saw but that one soul. Each Gôpî saw only her own Kṛishṇa, and was unconscious of any other, as she danced absorbed in that Kṛishṇa, round and round, arms round necks, eyes into eyes, all-forgetting, the world forgot, round and round in the whirl of ecstacy, afloat on the waves of love that is Bliss—round and round with that one Kṛishṇa, the all-in-all of the heart and existence—round and round the lover and the loved, the little soul turning round the great soul, the great soul pouring its Nectar into the little soul." The Râsa Dance, or as the name itself indicates 'the Dance of Love' is certainly one of the greatest Lîlâs of Kṛishṇa, and it represents the vibrations of the soulabsorbed mind, vibrations which filled the Universe with theNectar of Bliss.

Similarly the Kadamba-tree under which Kṛishṇa usually played His flute is a representation in physical form of the 'Tree of Life', and the flutes' dear strains which attracted the cows and preserved and protected them as if by a powerful charm are the music of the

soul, and the cows themselves being incarnations of Vedic Hymns and Truths.

'Shaḍja' is the name given to the first of the seven primary notes of the Indian gansut—known ordinarily as स, रि, ग, म, प, ध, नि. It is so-called because it is derived from the six organs--nose, throat, chest, palate, tongue and teeth and it is said to resemble the note of peacocks. It is usually kept as a tune or S'ruti to give melody to vocal or instrumental music.

(*To be continued.*)

OUR CRITIC

I

GOLDEN FETTERS of Mr. P. Sambandam, B.A. B.L., by the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha* at the Victoria Public Hall, on the 4th December 1910.

We have great pleasure in welcoming this new drama of Mr. P. Sambandam's. It is probably the first attempt at the treatment of modern social conditions in Tamil Dramatic Literature, and it could not have been inaugurated under better auspices—the author's long experience as an actor and playwright investing him with advantages which it can be possible for few others to claim. It is the story of a Brahmin youth, a graduate of Medicine, coming to love the wife wedded to him in boyhood, after discarding her for years, first in favour of a Native Christian girl, and later, under a wrong belief that she is dead. As the play opens, he is seen trying to conclude a marriage with the Christian maiden who has some qualms of conscience to enter into marriage relationship with a person who is already betrothed to another according to Hindu rites of marriage. The disinclination of the sceptic hero, Ramachandran to embrace Christianity is another formidable obstacle. At the beginning of the second Act, Ramachandran's love is revealed by a mistake to his good old orthodox father, a retired Sub-Judge. He is grieved at the situation and on his death-bed he only succeeds in getting a promise from his son that he will perform the ceremonies faithfully on his death. The news of Miss Rose Kamala's sudden death comes just too late to reach the ears of the expiring father and as the Act ends the son is overwhelmed with penitence and swoons on his father's body. A hiatus of two years—the Doctor is keeping up piously the memory of his lawful wife Pankajavalli who is reported to be dead. With an attack of consumption she is however brought under his care, by a clever device of her Japan-returned brother Swaminathan—they fall in love, revelations follow and they are united in conjugal bliss.

It is a refreshing variation to behold on the stage, the joys and sorrows of men and women we move with in society, after years of "Romance" with Kings and Queens strutting amidst the ceremonial surroundings of an ancient court. Vivid glimpses of modern Hindu social life, all of them within the range of familiar experience, and with important bearings on social problems constitute the merit of *Golden Fetters*. It is however necessary to point out that the author is still charmed by the more alluring features of Romance and the doubt may well be expressed whether the play will not 'do' when the details of place and time are touched up with an antique spirit. Providence seems to watch the plot with too

tender an attention for a "social drama." The golden wand of Romance is still conjured up to transmute the finish into happiness and the story ends as any 'old tale'. The roseate hues of Romance still linger and interfere somewhat seriously with the realism of the play—but we remember this is the first product of the transition.

We must however express our unfeigned appreciation of the play as a 'love-story'—there are very skilful touches indeed in the scene in which Ramachandran is struggling against the impulses of his passion for Pankajavalli. The incident of the dropped flower and the various steps which seem to bear the hero irresistibly on, are worked up with a minute attention to dramatic effect. The last moments of Ramachandran's father are portrayed with sympathy—the scene is exquisitely 'human', as Carlyle would call it—though the Hindu son certainly steps beyond the limits that can be assigned even to a love-sick and despondent youth.

We must be failing in our duty if we did not point out that the death of Miss Rose is rather a weak device of the author to get rid of an inconvenience in the path of his 'story'. The love of the Brahmin youth for the Native Christian girl, raises a number of interesting social problems and their solution is not offered by exercising the privilege of killing the character, which any dramatist no doubt possesses. We have also to confess that the characterisation might have been deeper, Pankajavalli invested with features of a more individual nature, and a fuller knowledge afforded of the secret of Miss Rose's attractiveness. There might also have been exhibited a more adequate treatment of social questions.

The comic "interludes' in the play, give abundant scope for brilliant exhibitions of humour, though the farcical element finds rather an undue predominance. The *Pisthakottai Swami* and his minions are an effective study in religious hypocrisy, so common in this country and their villainous machinations for gulling innocent people are presented with minute study and attention. But the author has not made out a good excuse for this part of the play. If it is urged that the introduction of the interludes is necessary for increasing the size of the rather small drama or contributing to a certain convenience in its presentation, it is hardly necessary to point out that they do not constitute sufficient grounds. We do not share Milton's contempt for 'comic stuff', but we are not wrong in thinking that these interludes have no direct bearing on the action of the play and there is absolutely no *point* in making some of the characters in the play take part in them. A useful contrast is suggested by the introduction of Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing* which might be regarded in the light of an interlude in its farcical aspect. But their blunders are seen to be directly responsible for the *denouement* of the play.

When attention is bestowed on the real difficulties of writing a social drama within the limited scopes afforded even by modern Hindu society, the most adverse critic would not be able to abstain from praising this new attempt. We congratulate the author and wish him all success in the new career so well begun.

Golden Fetters was staged with great success by the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha* on the 4th December at the Victoria Public Hall before an appreciative and crowded audience, There was a very laudable

attempt made at the presentation of scenery quite suited to the requirements of the play—the scenes before the Senate House, the terrace, and the Madras Central Station in the interlude being quite effective. The author personated the hero with his usual success, though in the opening scene, he did not make a very good exhibition of the lover, and was dangerously near coldness and want of feeling. The Japan-returned brother, Swaminathan was represented by Mr. V. V. Srinivasan, who got through his part with commendable ease and naturalness. Mr. P. Ekambaraiya gave a very faithful presentation of the old orthodox Hindu father, torn by physical anguish and anxiety for his son's future. Mr. Murugesam's attempt at portraying old age was successful, but for a lamentable want of clearness in his expression, which was probably the consequence. Ramachandran's servant, Mr. Sankaran was the compound of agility and playful humour intended by the author.

Mr. Rangavadivelu as Pankajavalli was particularly good in the love-scene already referred to, the action on the whole being characterised by feminine grace and tenderness. There might however have been more naturalness in the flow of conversation, the weakness being perceptible in the hero also. The philosophic song delivered by her in the same scene, with all its intense significance, did not however produce the effect intended by the writer. The very difficult art of personating a Brahmin widow was accomplished by Mr. K. C. Desikachari, and Mr. Ramakrishnayya was hardly less successful as the servant-maid. Rose Kamala had no trying situations to represent, but Mr. Vadivelu brought out very well the simple qualms and pious argumentativeness of the Christian girl.

A word of special praise must be reserved for the hero of the interlude, Mr. T. V. Gopalasami, and his companions for the gusto with which they acted the part of the swindlers, setting the audience in roars of laughter.

N. B.—The Christmas performances of The Suguna Vilasa Sabha will be noticed in our next issue.

II

YUDHALOLAN, an adaptation of *Othello:*

By Mr. P. S. Duraiswami Iyengar. Recently we have been favoured with translations or adaptations of a number of Shakespeare's plays. This kind of literary activity is but a sign of the times; the Drama in this country has now reached what we would call a healthful adollescent stage, wherein new regions are explored for assimilation and the works of the great artists of the world are pressed into service for adaptation. By this adaptation in Tamil of the great play of 'Othello,' Mr. Iyenger has not only made a valuable contribution to the Dramatic literature in the language of this part of the country, but has also done a great service to the general public, especially that section of it unacquainted with English or knowing it too little to undertand the complexity and mystery of the great play or fullness and force of the powers of the world's greatest Dramatist. The difficulties of the translation are indeed immense and the art consists in rendering the original with not only accuracy but beauty. In doing so, one has also to keep in view the totality of the effect aimed at in the original which is often the trick of the language used or the combination of the words employed, and hence all the more difficult to translate. We

congratulate the author in having achieved in some measure this ideal. He has closely followed and taken great pains to reproduce the real sense and force of the original--we must confess that the rendering in some places is painfully literal: happily the instances are but few. Next to 'Hamlet,' perhaps 'Othello' lends itself least either for translation or adaptation in Tamil—a language not over-rich in its vocabulary for description of complex mental conditions and feelings or fine shades of character. That there are faults here and there in the work under review is not surprising, nor that some portions of it are capable of improvement.

The author might have with profit consulted some of the famous Shakespearean Commentators. We hope that the author, encouraged by the appreciation which the work is sure to command would try his hand at other plays of English dramatists for those who have no access to the original.

III

OSCAR WILDE'S IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST by the Madras Dramatic Society, at the Museum Theatre, 9th December.

"In a certain sense, Mr. Wilde is to me our only thorough playwright," says Mr Bernard Shaw. "He plays with everything with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theatre." Despite the fact that Oscar Wilde's plays have no interest as stories and cannot boast of a 'plot,' they seem to be eminently suited for engaging 'the two hours traffic of the stage.' The buoyant humour and epigrammatic expression so characteristic of his drama are an irresistible attraction to the audience, and the spectator is only too ready to excuse the occasional lapses of his plays into farce. Special importance was therefore attached to the announcement of three performances of Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest* by the Madras Dramatic Society.

The Importance of Being Earnest is at best an 'amusing' comedy, which leaves the heart of the audience untouched. But the brilliance of the humorous conversation is more than a compensation for the absence of a serious purpose and this *trivial comedy* as the author calls it himself affords thorough enjoyment even to serious people. The constant attacks on modern civilization delivered through side-remarks may even be said to invest it with a philosophic significance.

A very high level of acting was maintained at the second performance, on the 9th December, the repetition even probably enabled them to rectify any deficiencies noticed on the first day. *Worthing, J. P.* of the Manor House and his friend *Algernon Moncrieff* were ably represented by Messrs. H. G. Ogden and W. R. Warden, respectively. Whether bandying repartees in the brilliant opening scene, or sustaining later, their disguises in a 'comedy of errors,' or coming to realise their positions in the *denouement* of the play, they were vivid and almost faultless in their presentation. Mr. Ogden's remarkable self-control in the scene of the false mourning was appealing in all its comic force. It is, however, necessary to point out that there might have been a more playful liveliness and vivacity in the conversation of the two gay young men 'about town', and a greater quickness of movement was probably also necessary to produce to the full, the effect intended by the dramatist.

Mrs. P. L. Moore as *Gwendoline Fairfax* and Miss Atkinson as *Cecily Cardew*, the

charming ward of John Worthing, won applause which was indeed very well deserved. As the delightful Fairfax, Mrs. Moore produced a striking effect—her lively expression and modulation of speech formed an admirable study in good acting. Miss. Atkinson was the picture of virgin innocence and unsophisticated tenderness, demanded by the character of the young Cecily, and she got through her part with commendable grace and facility of movement.

Lady Bracknell, or *Aunt Augusta*, with her conceited airs and 'modern' notions of social respectability found a worthy exponent in Mrs. Arthur Thomas whose calmness and self-possession were valuable assets for the part she had to act. One could also see a significant suggestiveness underlying her characteristic utterances.

Mrs. H. C. A. Goodall and Mr. R. S. F. Simson had not very 'attractive' characters to present, one as the old absent-minded governess *Miss Prism* and the other as the *Rector Chasuable*, but they took advantage of the good opportunities offered to them in the course of the play. Mr. Simson was particularly successful in portraying the Canon's serenity and Mrs. Goodall rose equal to the rather taxing demands of the *farcical finale*. The play was on the whole a remarkable success. The actors and actresses deserve to be warmly congratulated on the very good effect they were able to produce.

A criticism, which may however appear characteristically Indian suggested itself to us and we offer it for what it is worth. The acting very often wore an aspect of reserve, calmness and precision which was dangerously near coldness and want of feeling—it struck us that the actors might have been more demonstrative. We do not however desire to be understood as advocating unnecessary effusiveness on the stage. But that is perhaps the English ideal, consistent with the equanimity in outward behaviour somewhat characteristic of the nation. We may be allowed, in this connection, to invite the attention of our readers to an interesting discussion in the December number of the *Strand*, under the title, *The Art of Gesture.* The Spanish Court-dancer Madame Carmen Turia dwells on this characteristic of the English people and there is a lively defence by Miss Lilie Elsie who strives to prove the superior advantages of comparative repose.

The scenic arrangements left nothing to be desired, the Garden Scene at the Manor deserving special appreciation. Messrs. Odgers and Coles must be congratulated on the general excellence of the arrangements.

OUR BOUQUET

Mr. H. A. Jones on the Present Condition of the English Drama

The following in an extract from a recent speach of Mr. H. A. Jones, the English Dramatist:

I pass on to a brief glance over the general position and outlook of English Drama. It can, I think be claimed, that there are many bright and encouraging signs in the dramatic atmosphere. But it is a fatal error to dwell complacently on our virtue and achievements. To rest and be thankful is the sign of old age and decrepitude. I pass our virtues and achievement then and I propose to notice, to night, a rather disquieting symptom of the present dramatic movement. I say movement because move-

ment implies life and activity. A noticeable feature of the English drama of recent years has been an assumption that the drama in the future must do something that the drama has never done before; that it must be pre-eminently a direct, explicit and merciless expounder and enforcer of ethical, social, political and scientific doctrines and theories. The English drama stands in great danger of being placed in the offensive position of a moral teacher. I beg my comrades and colleagues to notice the wise admonition addressed to us by Mr. Walkley at the dinner of the general Theatrical Fund a few days ago :

"If the drama is to develop, it will have to develop along dramatic lines, shaping itself like every other art, in conformity with its peculiar medium of expression. It must obey the law of economy in art, not to run to waste by aiming at effects which could just as easily be produced without the apparatus of a theatre, and the aid of a company of actors. And a play must always in the future, as in the past, be something organic and whole, or it will not hold the spectator's attention."

These are words which I think all of us writing plays will do well to lay to heart.

Once more it has been suggested that the rules of Aristotle for making a play should be left out of account, and thrown aside in our national drama. To the very able defence of Aristotle in this morning's *Times* I need add nothing. But I will with great humility offer a copy of Mr. Butcher's most valuable translation and commentary to any playwright who is anxious to learn here to write a successful play. And with all the emphasis at my command, I do as a practical playwright affirm and reaffirm that Aristotle's first leading rule remains to day the leading rule whereby to fashion any play that can hope for permanent success. " The plot is the first thing " says Aristotle. Not the chief thing ; but the first thing. Character-drawing, literature, ideas, philosophy, righteousness itself, can only be effectively introduced into a play that has already been provided with a definite articulate, vertebrate scheme of action. Further it has lately been said that our National Drama should be normal. And here I am whole-heartedly in accord with the dictum. I am tempted, but I will not be cruel enough to inqnire how far many of our present masterpieces, have been 'normal' and addressed to the normal man.

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SHAKESPEARE AND MOLIERE.

In the *North American Review* for September Mr. Brander Mathews, the author of a new life of Moliere writes a very interesting essay entitled "Shakespeare and Moliere" which he opens with a parallel between the two greatest dramatists of their respective countries. He says that in actual practice of the dramatic art Moliere was superior to Shakespeare. Moliere was the foremost, comedian of the world, but Shakespeare is the master-mind of all literature, but in the comedy of real life he has not Moliere's life :—

Moliere was only fifty one when he died, the same age attained by Lessing, and Balzac. Shakespeare survived to be fifty two, as Thackeray survived to be fifty three. In the external circumstances of their several careers Shakespeare and Moliere are often curiously alike. They were both born in prosperous house-holds of the middle class ; and they were not stinted in their youth although

the affairs of both fathers may have become embarrassed later. Shakespeare may have gone to the grammar school at Stratford ; and Moliere went to the best school in Paris, getting a more thorough training. Neither of them ever achieved the wide culture of Lessing, still less the minute the scholarship of Racine. Both broke away from their homes to become actors ; and both after acting for a while undertook to write plays. Both began modestly as dramatists content at first to imitate and to patch up earlier work. Even when they had given over this prentice labour, their earlier pieces contained little promises of their later mastery. Moliere was the manager of his company while Shakespeare was only one of several partners in his and both of them had a shrewd sagacity in business affairs, governing their private fortunes with skill, pulling money out at interest and amassing a comfortable reserve. Both of them liked the good things of life ; and neither of them took an austere view of mankind.

Both of them made unhesitating use of the works of their predecessors and contemporaries, despoiling alike the alien and the native, taking their raw material wherever they found it as though they disdained the trouble of mere invention, choosing to put forth their full imagination rather in the interpretation of stories which others less gifted had failed to use to full advantage. Both of them despite this casual borrowing of situations were boldly original in their creation of character. Both of them were copious in their productivity and swift in execution. Ben Jonson records that Shakespeare "never blotted alive" ; and Boileaw tried in vain to get Moliere to correct, Both of them were helpful to younger authors, Shakespeare to Jonson and Moliere to Racine. Both of them in their later years on occasions collaborated with fellow dramatists, Shakespeare with Fletcher and Moliere with Corneille. Both of them cared little for the publication of their pieces. Both of them had the gift of friendship and were highly esteemed by their associates, even if neither of them was really appreciated by his contemporaries. Both of them took life soberly, never surprised that it was not better. Many of these resemblances in the careear the two great dramatists may be merely fortuitious; but some of them are strangely significant. And it would not be difficult to pick out other points of similarity or of contrast in their works.

THE ART OF QUICK CHANGE.

In a recent number of the *Strand* there is an instructive article on the above subject based on an interview with the English actor Mr. R. A. Roberts. The changes which Mr. Roberts adopts on the stage are managed so quickly that people absolutely refuse to believe the truth of the statement on the programme to the effect that all the characters in the sketch are played by him. He is even regarded as an impudent impostor trying to produce exaggerated impressions of his skill by fraud and dishonesty. Years ago he told a man that he could remove his coat and waist in a second. When he refused to believe it he showed it done repeatedly. Mr. Roberts has discovered particular methods aiding quickness in change, in costume as well as make-up but he is absolutely devoid of 'tricks.' An examination of the hundreds of costumes worn by him will only show their genuineness and in none is there a

device which could help him in getting them rapidly on or off, and if is also interesting to note that he never wears one dress over another. The average time he takes to effect a change is two and half seconds, for elaborate presentations he takes three or four seconds. When he was playing a few years ago at the *Palace Theatre*, some friends of his were allowed to see him in the Green Room. He came off the stage as an old woman and as he did so his garments dropped from him, leaving a man clad in tights. After some rapid movements amid a number of assistants, he emerged a fine youngman in modern garb and was on the stage within three seconds. 'It is the work of the evil one' an Indian Maharajah is reported to have said, when he witnessed the strange performance.

Mr. Roberts has acquired this extraordinary facility by constant practice and rehearsals at home as well as on the stage.

The change from Dick Turpin's to old Sally's first took him eight minutes but by gradual practice he reduced it to two seconds and three-quarters. He flings himself down on leaving the stage and in less than a second Turpin's dress is removed. Then comes a jump into old Sally's dress; the wig is put on by one dresser while the dress is fastened behind by the other, the last pull to the apron strings being actually given as old Sally makes her entrance on the stage.

A noteworthy feature of Mr. Robert's skill is that he gets through a certain amount of the work involved in the change when he is on the stage itself, the lines on the face altered or removed when about to leave it, without exciting the least suspicion. With all the caution observed in making these changes, mistakes have occurred. A belt round his waist was once pulled several inches tighter than it should have been done. The artiste went on the stage and though in agonies got through the part alright. He however fainted when he came off the stage.

Mr. Robert's extraordinary skill in the art of quick change must furnish actors on the Indian stage with a number of lessons—it is not unusual in this country to see intolerable delays caused by an absence of this ability in effecting changes of costume.

DRAMATIC NEWS

THE SUGUNA VILASA SABHA :

We understand there will be a performance of *Hamlet* in Tamil, in the course of this month, probably in aid of the 'Edward Memorial Fund.'

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Mr. V. Vencatachela Aiyar has, we learn adopted in Telugu Moliere's *Physician in Spite of Himself* under the title of *Vidhileka Vaidyudu*. It would probably be produced as an opera and staged also in the course of the month.

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SUMANO RANJANA SAMAJAM.

We are glad to announce that this new dramatic society of Triplicane has arranged to give the following performances in January at the new *Lyric* theatre, Misquith's Buildings, Mount Road.

2nd Jan. 5-30 P.M. *Sakuntala* (Telugu.)

3rd Jan. 9 P.M. *Harischandra* (Telugu.)

4th Jan. 9 P.M. *Prithi Rai* (Tamil.)

SARASA VINODINI SABHA OF BELLARY.

In addition to the 'Xmas performances given by this pioneer Amateur Dramatic Society, we are glad to learn that arrangements have been made for another series of performances during the first fortnight in January.